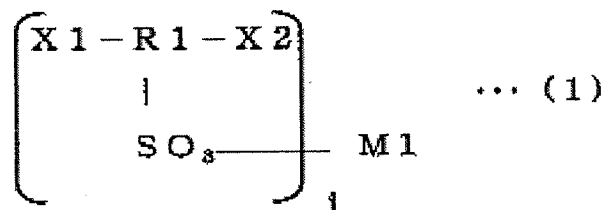


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A polyether ester elastic fiber comprising a polyether ester elastomer containing polybutylene terephthalate as a hard segment and polyoxyethylene glycol as a soft segment, characterized by having a coefficient of moisture absorption of not less than 5 % at 35°C and at a RH of 95 % and a coefficient of water absorption extension of not less than 10 %, and the polyether ester elastomer is copolymerized with a metal organic sulfonate represented by the following general formula (1), and the intrinsic viscosity of the elastic fiber is not less than 0.9,

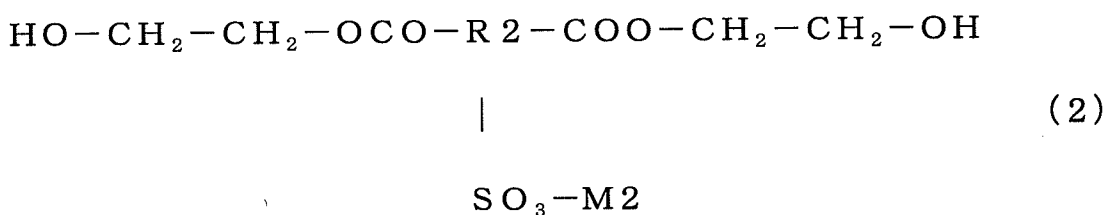


wherein, R1 represents an aromatic hydrocarbon group or an aliphatic hydrocarbon group, X1 represents an ester-forming functional group, X2 represents an ester-forming functional group identical to or different from X1 or a hydrogen atom, M1 represents an alkali metal or an alkaline earth metal, and j represents 1 or 2.

2. (canceled).

3. (currently amended): The polyether ester elastic fiber according to Claim 1 ~~Claim 2~~, wherein the shrinkage percentage of the elastic fiber in boiling water is not less than 10 %.

4. (currently amended): The polyether ester elastic fiber according to Claim 1 ~~Claim 2~~, wherein the metal organic sulfonate is a compound represented by the following general formula (2),



wherein, R₂ represents an aromatic hydrocarbon group or an aliphatic hydrocarbon group, M₂ represents an alkali metal or an alkaline earth metal.

5. (currently amended): The polyether ester elastic fiber according to Claim 1 ~~Claim 2~~, wherein the copolymerization quantity of the metal organic sulfonate is in a range of 0.1 to 20 percent by mole based on the acid component constituting the polyether ester elastomer.

6 - 7. (canceled).

8. (previously presented): The polyether ester elastic fiber according to claim 1, wherein the ratio of the hard segment : the soft segment is in a range of 30 : 70 to 70 : 30 based on weight.

9. (previously presented): The polyether ester elastic fiber according to claim 1, wherein a finishing oil in which at least one lubricant selected from the group consisting of mineral oils, silicones and aliphatic esters and an ether-based or ester-based nonionic surfactant occupy 70 to 100 percent by weight and 0 to 30 percent by weight, respectively, of said finishing oil is adhered to the surface of the elastic fiber in an amount of 0.5 to 5.0 percent by weight based on the weight of said fiber.

10. (original): The polyether ester elastic fiber according to Claim 9, wherein the viscosity of the finishing oil at 30°C is 5×10^{-6} to 4×10^{-5} m²/s.

11 - 20. (canceled).